

Remarks

Claims 1 and 4-25 are pending in the present application. Claims 1 and 4-25 are rejected. No new matter has been added. It is respectfully submitted that the pending claims define allowable subject matter.

Claims 1 and 4-25 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over McMorrow et al. (U.S. Patent 6,569,097 B1), hereafter McMorrow, in view of Kim et al. (U.S. Patent 5,492,125), hereafter Kim. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for at least the reasons set forth hereafter.

Independent claim 1 has been amended to recite a method for managing ultrasound examination information that includes, in part “providing immediately to a billing server electronic notification of completion of the at least one ultrasound scan with a completion signal upon determining the completion of the at least one ultrasound scan.” Independent claim 21 has been amended to recite a user interface for an ultrasound system that includes, in part “a menu portion for receiving a user input indicating the completion of at least one ultrasound scan, a completion signal transmitted immediately to a remote billing system based upon the user input and used by the remote billing system for generating a billing statement related to the completed ultrasound scan.” Applicants submit the cited references fail to teach or suggest the claimed method and user interface.

Each of claims 1 and 21 requires that the completion signal is provided or transmitted immediately to a billing server or system. Thus, the completion signal is transmitted without introducing any intentional delay or adding steps or destinations prior to being received at the billing server or system.

In contrast, the system of McMorrow does not provide this immediate completion signal or notification. In particular, the system of McMorrow transmits the acquired data to a database

server to be processed first. Then, *after processing is complete*, a determination is made as to whether the user (e.g., doctor) can access the data and whether the identification number of the examination and the ID of the particular electronic instrument are sent to the customer relationship management (CRM) accounting server to create a billing (see, e.g., McMorrow, col. 9, lines 9-37). Thus, the system of McMorrow does not immediately send notification to a billing server or system, but instead requires this intermediate step of processing. The delay added by this intermediate step can be significant, such as if, the processing is extensive, or may even block further steps until a user action is performed.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that claims 1 and 21 are allowable.

Independent claim 14 has been amended to recite a method for managing ultrasound examination information that includes, in part “generating an output based upon (i) a notification of an update or change to a scheduled ultrasound scan to be performed as part of the one or more ultrasound scans and (ii) a received completion signal that at least one of the one or more ultrasound scans is complete, the output being a billing statement corresponding to the ultrasound examination information and the update or change notification such that billing for the ultrasound scans and update or change are separately identified, and provided remote from an ultrasound system used to perform the ultrasound examination.” Applicants submit the cited references fail to teach or suggest the claimed method.

Claim 14 requires a billing statement generated based on notification that separately identifies billing for ultrasound scans and updates or changes. Although McMorrow teaches that the system can be used to develop appropriate billing for the patient’s insurance provider, there is nothing that describes or suggests the claimed separate identification on the billing statement. Moreover, a general teaching in a reference cannot anticipate a specific claim element. Applicants submit that the level of teaching in McMorrow cannot support a rejection of claim 14.

Additionally, such a teaching cannot be inherent as the system would not necessarily have to perform in this manner.

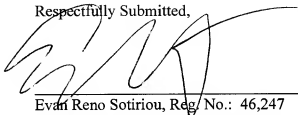
Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 14 is allowable.

Applicants also submit that Kim fails to make up for the deficiencies in McMorow.

Additionally, Applicants submit that dependent claim 4-13, 15-20 and 22-25 recite subject matter not anticipated or rendered obvious by the cited references. Moreover, dependent claims 4-13, 15-20 and 22-25 are allowable based at least on the dependency of these claims from the independent claims.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the cited references neither anticipate nor render obvious the claimed invention and the pending claims in this application are believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and favorable action is respectfully solicited. Should anything remain in order to place the present application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is kindly invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully Submitted,



Date: December 3, 2010

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